

KEEP THE FAITH*

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Success is a danger that is second only to failure. In the past forty years, all of us in agriculture and particularly farmers have grown accustomed to continued success. We have made farmers first class citizens and farming a most respectable vocation. We have been successful because we had faith in agricultural leaders, faith in agricultural researchers and faith in each other. Today more than ever we must keep the faith.

Farmers have had faith in agricultural researchers and taken "far out" research like AI and put it to work on their farms. Agricultural research has moved quickly from the research station to application on the farm. Some say farmers have adopted and applied new research more quickly than other segment of the economy.

As a result of this faith in new research, farmers have experienced a tremendous revolution in agriculture. This revolution has:

1. Taken disease and bacteria out of milk
2. Taken the fat and toughness out of meat
3. Taken the squeeze out of oranges and put the juice on the breakfast table 365 days a year
4. Taken the chickens out of the backyard
5. Taken worms out of corn, apples, etc.
6. Taken the peel off the potatoe
7. Taken the bread out of the oven
8. Emancipated women from a daylong work duty in the kitchen
9. Made tomatoes available everyday
10. Removed the farmer from the end of a pitch fork and put him on the business end of a pencil and a computer
11. Removed the farmer from the dust of the hay mow, the cold wet fodder shock in a muddy field to the comfort cab of the combine
12. Removed the farmer from the dust behind a team of horses and put him in the air-conditioned cab of a tractor

*The Ontario Association of Animal Breeders, Twenty First Annual Convention, Toronto, Canada, November 10, 1972.

13. Taken the hoe from the hand of the farm wife and replaced it with the steering wheel of a car so she can drive to the supermarket
14. Taken the chicken feathers from the farm wife's hair and replaced it with the latest hairdo
15. Taken the cows foot from the bucket and given the farmer's wife a friendly milkman

But this is only the beginning. These accomplishments are "the past" and "the past is prologue". The past is only the beginning - the past is the launching pad for our blast off into the future. The future is that uncharted sea that lies ahead.

You have built successful organizations such as your AI's to bring you needed services. Buy many young farmers have never had the privilege of farming without the associations their forefathers built to make research available to them in their farming operation.

You have built, financed and supported educational institutions. Farmers have educated their sons and daughters. These educated country kids have become leaders in the business world, in education, in medicine, in law, in government, in cooperatives, in agriculture research and agribusiness.

You have liberated many of the people from the necessity of scratching the soil in the sun, rain, heat and cold for a living. You have put these liberated people in air-conditioned offices, in factories to make TV's, dishwashers, automobiles, built-in maid services, in laboratories to conquer disease, in airplanes, in campers, boats, a second home, a 40 hour week with an annual vacation, etc.

By freeing people from being tied to the soil in order to obtain their food, you have released a productive capacity that provides part of the world's population with motor vehicles, radios, TV's, etc.

North American Farmers have made food so plentiful that very few people need to go to bed hungry for lack of food, but some of us should because of an abundance that permits us to over consume food.

Farm families are not the only ones benefitting from this revolution. All the people of the world benefit as food produced on this continent is exported around the world.

In the states, farmers have doubled the beef supply per person in just 20 years, and they have done even better with poultry. I'm sure you have had similar success in Canada.

In much of the world women go to the market to see if there is food. Here the food shopper must decide which food she wants to buy, and expects to find an abundance of the identical food product everyday of the year.

I am told that you have increased your productivity per man hour of farmers so that it is increasing twice as fast as in manufacturing industries.

And with all this there are those who say so what.

Your accomplishments have been taken for granted by those who don't understand or don't appreciate what you have gained. They don't appreciate because they have never known what it is like to live without what they have today.

Agricultural chemicals have taken the weeds from our fields, taken our crops away from insects and diseases and made them available for human consumption around the world. In the states for every dollar invested, agricultural chemicals give us the greatest return - increased yields for farmers and cheaper food for consumers.

We have set a fast pace for ourselves in agriculture. An agribusiness that fails to grow or keep up with the times will die. When we become too prosperous we become too comfortable and our success becomes a threat to our prosperity. It is motivation of people that determines success. Motivation is not a one time injection. Motivation is the spark that ignites talent.

Someone once said that 10% of the people are creators of change. These are the leaders, the first to try something new. These are the people who will conquer new frontiers. They are the people who are here today. Eighty percent of the people are reactors to change. These are your members who have followed your leadership. Then we can always expect 10% to resist change.

You have elected a board of directors to represent you and guide your organization. You deserve the directors you have elected and they deserve your support. You must keep the faith in your directors, management and industry. Your directors may be called upon to make decisions that in the short run may be contrary to your vested interest. You must keep the faith.

This week I asked a group of seniors at Ohio State University in a business management seminar a hypothetical question similar to the decision made by those who had faith in AI thirty years ago - not one of these young men were willing to stick their necks out. You are here today because a handful of people had faith in AI. OAAB will be here in the future if you - keep the faith.